

## Perspectives of Rural Tourism in the European Tourism Market

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### Abstract

This paper addresses in a complex, multidimensional way, the issue of measuring the activity of rural tourism. It aims to address the "key" coordinates of the scope of rural tourism, the indicators used in the evaluation of methodologies and methods applied to information on the components of the activity of this type of tourism.

The statistical analysis of the rural tourism activity in the Bran-Moeciu area was carried out on the two components of the rural tourism market: "rural tourist supply and demand". The presentation of the offer consisted in a highlighting of the natural and anthropic tourist potential of the area, as well as of the technical-material base that it has, in the conditions of existence and manifestation of some particularities that stand out as they are presented and analyzed in close correlation. with statistical results.

The phenomenon of tourism industrialization both globally and nationally, was based on the "productivist vision" of tourism activities, which led to the concentration of supply in the center of tourist areas, investments corresponding to the requirements of the ongoing development process, standardization The process of globalization and sustainable development of tourism aims at practicing tourism activities under the incidence of ecological and rational use of resources, currently rural tourism being the one that best meets the respective requirements.

This article brings added value by the punctual approach of a tourist segment which is more and more important in terms of sustainable environmental development. That being said, it can be stated that certain elements developed in this article may represent the starting point of some practical approaches.

### Keywords

rural tourism, tourism market, economy, development.

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### Introduction

Services currently play a key role in economic growth (Dima, et al., 2020). This trend manifested worldwide is also noticeable in Romania, the priority being the sustainable development of tourism, as an essential component of the tertiary sector (Radulescu, et al., 2020). The affiliation of tourism to the service sector derives from the way of achieving some of its defining features such as mobility,

dynamism or ability to adapt to the requirements of each tourist, as well as the particularities of the tourist product, because it is the result of a harmonious combination of services. and own mechanical use.

The economic importance of rural tourism is always increasing and attracts the attention of economic agents and the state, which influences the emergence of new tourism companies and tourist activity directions (Lane, 2009). This evolution changes the competitive picture of the sector (Profiroiu, et al., 2020), putting in the foreground the issue of competitiveness of national tourism products. The development of rural tourism and its integration in the structure of the economy implies the continuous modification of its content and a diversification of its forms of manifestation (Long, 2000). Thus, among other types of tourism, rural tourism becomes one of the main priorities of the development of this branch in many European countries (Ribeiro and Marques, 2002).

The development of daily activities in conditions of multiple and rapid transformations on all economic and social levels and especially in the technical-informational level, constantly favors the emergence of urban stress (Burlacu, et al., 2020) which becomes an increasingly dangerous weapon for each individual and society as a whole (Alpopi, et al., 2018). Thus, the individual's desire to leave the workplace temporarily, to quiet, pollution-free areas, where nature is *the best friend of escape*, for movement, rest, recreation, leisure (Bran, et al., 2018).

This desire is facilitated by the reduction of weekly hours and working week days, as well as by the increase in the number of days devoted to rest leave, a process that over the years undergoes a transformation towards their fragmentation (Alecuc, 2006).

The increase of the free time and the tendency of the individual to exercise several remunerated activities, also have a favorable effect on the practice of tourist activities (Ali, 2016). Also, the development of a remunerated activity at home has a double implication: minimum effort that can be spent participating in tourist activities (Negescu Oancea, et al., 2020); on the other hand, it can directly involve the individual in the tourist activity, being the owner of a company with a tourist profile; he creates incomes from which he will also spend them in the same sector, either through tourist investments or by spending his holidays in a "preferential tourist oasis" (Wilson, 2001).

Along with the urban agglomeration, another step in the development of sustainable tourism includes the increase of free time, the increase of the individual's income and the increase of the level of knowledge and education (Camilleri, 2018). The reform of the education system, the technical-informational progress and last but not least, the "explosion" of the media are the factors that raised the level of education and knowledge of the population, which tends more and more towards another way of spending free time (Burlacu, et al., 2018).

### **Review of the scientific literature**

The practice of rural tourism worldwide has been studied and debated in various specialized works through the publications of several authors in the field of tourism: Nistoreanu P., Glăvan V., Mitrache Ș.L, Bold I

The specialized literature in the field of tourism and, especially, of the issue of rural tourism, has devoted many works and the names of some authors represent today important points of reference (Rădulescu, et al., 2018). Among them, we will mention three personalities who, through their work, managed to include in their courses more than just information. It is about the work *Ecotourism and rural tourism*, third edition. which has as coordinator. Puiu Nistoreanu, outstanding personality of the Romanian university world. Author of numerous books on rural tourism and agrotourism, coordinator of many scientific articles on topics of great interest.

Along with the book of professor Puiu Nistoreanu, another work forms the second pillar of support for this field. *Rural tourism, The absorption of European funds*, having as sole author the associate professor Dr. Marinela Ghereș, opens the way to a unique approach to the rural environment, through the prism of economic levers that can be accessed by entrepreneurs in agrotourism and rural tourism.

Vasile Glăvan published in 2003, a work entitled Rural Tourism. Agrotourism. Sustainable tourism. Ecotourism, a specialized book, folded on the 4 major topics of interest that form, by the way, the title of the book. Together with Puiu Nistoreanu and Marinela Ghereș, he manages to complete the specialized literature with books that impress the reader due to the complex approaches, research methods recognized in the scientific world and last but not least due to the applicability and solutions offered to the Romanian business environment. We remember in this context the year 1976, when the famous tourism specialist Oscar Snak publishes his first known book of high synthesis tourism "Economy and organization of tourism 2, in which the second chapter is dedicated to" forms of tourism "that can be practiced and the underlying criteria.

### **Research methodology**

Measuring tourism in the vision of sustainable development, involves the approach and application of principles and methods that are the basis for the formation and use of a complete set of economic indicators. Elements of statistical determination were also used in the case of studying the demand and consumption of rural tourism in Bran-Moeciu, through which we highlighted: the increasing trend of the number of tourists staying in rural tourist units from 2010 to 2019; the increase of their share in the agrotourism pensions in the area, the percentages belonging to the other types being in continuous decrease; an increasing evolution of the number of overnight stays; a percentage increase that also belongs to the agritourism pensions compared to the percentages determined for the other types of units, regarding the distribution of the number of overnight stays.

The approach varies from conceptual to methodological dimensioning for exploring the experimental field, which includes: information, comparative analysis, interpretations, deductive and inductive testing of ideas.

### **Results and discussion**

Romania's geographical position, which imprints particularities on nature and human activity, complemented by the presence of the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea, gives the country a strong geographical personality, doubled by a special tourist vocation.

By harmoniously combining the various and spectacular forms of relief of the favorable climate for tourism throughout the year, flora, fauna, anthropogenic potential, traditions that have not been lost in the mists of time, Romania has a tourist heritage that is can develop and modernize through capitalization and promotion activities in the context of the sustainable and ecological evolution of rural tourism.

The promotion of itinerant rural tourism is the main objective on which its development must focus, involving the use of traditional means: sales aids (guides, brochures, leaflets, catalogs), advertising objects, presence at tourism events, use of media (TV, publications, radio, internet), offering the possibility to transmit information in as many international languages as possible.

#### *Bran-Moeciu area on the rural tourist market in Romania*

The development of rural tourism in the Bran-Moeciu tourist area was possible thanks to the effort made by the locals to find and offer, permanently, new, attractive elements and quality tourist services, in accordance with the current requirements of tourism.

Being not only the oldest area, but also the best outlined in terms of rural tourism, in the situation of intensification and emphasis of tourism promotion and development, the future is in favor of this tourist area.

In this context, it is possible to study the tourist supply and demand of this rural area, completing them with a forecast of the evolution of rural tourism, in the conditions of applying adequate marketing strategies, based on an efficient management. Defining the tourist offer through "elements of attraction" that motivate the trip and those intended to ensure the capitalization of premiums, involves the inclusion in its structure of natural and anthropogenic potential, the technical-material base, labor and trading conditions.

*Analysis of rural tourism demand and consumption*

Fluctuations in rural tourist demand and consumption in the Bran-Moeciu tourist area can be highlighted with the help of the main quantification indicators: number of tourists accommodated and number of overnight stays registered in the tourist reception structures.

The evolution of the number of tourists arriving in the Bran-Moeciu tourist area, in the period 2010-2019, is the result of the theoretical demand transformed into actual demand, on the one hand as a result of satisfying the motivations to practice rural tourism, and on the other hand as a response to the quality of the offer of this type of tourism.

**Table no. 1. The evolution of the number of tourists arriving in the Bran-Moeciu tourist area**

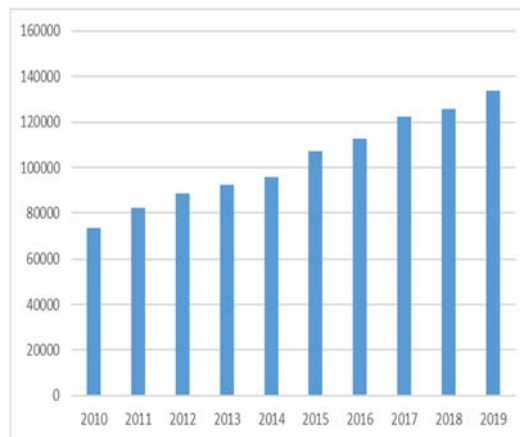
Years	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2005	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of tourists	25300	29770	34600	40090	43330	48900	56004	58864	60121	65204

*Source: Braşov County Directorate of Statistics and ANTREC-Bran branch*

The increasing trend of the number of tourists in the rural tourist reception structures (represented in tables and graphs) represents the argument based on which the structural mutations regarding the number of tourists accommodated on the types of rural tourist reception units in Bran-Moeciu area are analyzed.

In close accordance with the structural changes registered by the existing accommodation capacity, there are also those regarding the number of accommodated tourists. Thus, the increase of the share of the number of tourists accommodated in the agritourism pensions is noticed from one year to another, the percentages of the other types being in a process of decreasing content.

The evolution of the number of overnight stays in the Bran-Moeciu tourist area closely follows the growth trend registered by the number of tourists accommodated in the tourist reception structures.



**Figure no. 1. Number of tourists arriving in the tourist area Bran - Moeciu**

*Source: Braşov County Directorate of Statistics and ANTREC-Brasov branch*

During the ten years, the specifics of the tourism practiced in the Bran-Moeciu area led to the onset of a fierce competition between pensions and agritourism pensions. The first two places were disputed between the two types of units, which was reflected in a percentage increase for agritourism pensions by 39.8%, to the detriment of pensions whose decrease was 26.36%.

Thus, it can be highlighted, for the period 2010-2019, the increasing evolution of the number of tourists and overnight stays in the structures of tourist reception, the structural mutations placing on the first place the agro-tourist pensions. The continuation of the process of accentuated development

of rural tourism in the Bran-Moeciu area opens the perspective of practicing this type of tourism at the level of international standards. For the whole region of rural tourism, a general average was established, ie, the average number of tourists arriving during the four years was identified. Seasonality indices (k), calculated as a ratio between the quarterly average number of tourists and their annual average of 5421.06 tourists, show a strong seasonality, with weights exceeding 100%.

*The need to develop rural tourism and the prospects of its integration on the European tourism market*

The economic and social development is harmoniously combined with the development of rural tourism, between the two there is a relationship of correspondence and reciprocity (Botezatu, 2014). The statement is argued by the double involvement that appears as a circuit, in the sense that the activities specific to rural tourism through their complexity, contribute to the overall development of rural areas, while this development will in turn lead to an increase in tourism.

The analysis based on the collected statistical data can become reality, only in the conditions of continuing the process of achieving a balance between the demand and supply of rural tourism on its specific market and the promotion of rural tourism products on domestic and international tourism.

The rural tourist offer is identified, in fact, with the rural tourist product, which is currently more and more in demand on the tourist market (Carneiro, 2015). The components of these products include traditional elements specific to the rural space included in the local tourist circuit, so that their particularities are outlined based on local tourist heritage, labor resources and services involved in tourism, while respecting the principles of sustainable development.

The primary role in the presentation of rural tourism products belongs to the promotional activity that must take place in the form of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, the use of brands, promotional events and sales forces (Kastenholz, 2012).

At the level of Bran locality, the promotion can be done through an advertising material written in a tourist guide or in the form of a video cassette that presents suggestive images from the respective area.

Regardless of the presentation, the material must inventory all the households that are arranged for rural tourism. The activities of detailed preparation of the offers of rural tourist products at all levels, of preparation of the households and economic agents, can be put into practice only through a functional management, both locally and globally. In order to facilitate the correspondence with the internal and external partners, at all levels, horizontally and vertically, it is necessary to adopt some standards regarding the evaluation criteria, the way of making the advertisement and publicity, the signs used, etc.

Rural tourism is one of the solutions for the development of the entire rural area. The expected success can be achieved through an overall development of the rural environment, based on a moderate increase in time and to the benefit of the rural area because a rapid or disorderly development of rural tourism can damage the environment, can lead to an impact on the population. local. Also, the local population must be prepared socially and professionally for the tourist activities, and through feasible market studies, the food production must be organized with the adaptation to the demand, as well as through the tourist motivation. Thus, rural tourism can be included in all the tourist activities of the region as well as in the context of the integrated zonal policy.

The issue of conservation is located in a much broader framework than the policy of preserving the quality of the built environment. It is obvious that the inhabitants of the villages want and must take advantage of the progress of modern life. As a result, the character of the villages changes from day to day, the man integrating in his time. The result is a conflict between tradition and modernity, between conservation and evolution, which manifests itself differently depending on the conditions of each geographical area.

The revival of rural settlements, the transition from traditionalist architecture to modern architecture without embarrassing each other is a difficult undertaking that requires study, time and funds, the most seductive solution for reviving villages is to introduce them to major tourist circuits.

Regarding the diversification of activities in the Bran-Moeciu area, it tends to favor small non-polluting industries of handicraft production, acting on infrastructures and administrative and fiscal procedures on stimulating and supporting initiatives in the field of rural tourism. It also aims to enhance local resources, rational exploitation of hydropower potential, promote alternative and renewable energies and improve home heating systems to achieve higher yields through the use of wood residues and other secondary resources.

At the national level, it is necessary to implement a rural development policy, which should be able to stimulate the efforts undertaken towards the isolation of the Romanian village, regulations that allow its use, as well as institutions that function. for the same purpose, and last but not least the existence of funds allocated in the desired direction.

### **Conclusion**

The economic and social development is harmoniously combined with the development of rural tourism, between the two there is a relationship of correspondence and reciprocity. The statement is argued by the double involvement that appears as a circuit, in the sense that the activities specific to rural tourism through their complexity, contribute to the overall development of rural areas, while this development will in turn determine an increase in tourism.

In the analyzed period 2010-2019, against the background of the evolutions of the existing accommodation capacity, structural mutations are registered, being the result of the efforts of locals, local authorities or international organizations regarding the diversification of rural tourism offer, according to the trends manifested in rural tourism demand.

Architectural constructions with regional rural specificity have appeared, which are registered as agrotourism pensions and provide tourists with facilities as close as possible to international standards. The competition that thus appears between pensions and agritourism pensions is highlighted as an offer, in the form of the number of units and accommodation places made available to tourists.

In this context, the number of tourist accommodation places offered by agritourism pensions has experienced a process of continuous growth, compared to pensions, which are facing a rather sharp decrease. The same elements of statistical determination were used in the case of studying the demand and consumption of rural tourism in Bran-Moeciu, which highlighted: the growing trend of the number of tourists staying in rural tourism units from 2010 to 2019.

At the national level, it is necessary to implement a rural development policy that is able to stimulate the efforts undertaken towards the isolation of the Romanian village, regulations that allow its use, as well as institutions that operate in the same purpose and last but not least the existence of funds allocated in the desired direction.

For Romania, in the current period, these concerns have widened, the acceptance of this development representing a responsible way of development in the medium and long term, in accordance with the national interest and with the requirements of international collaboration. Rural economies are characterized by differentiated strategies and community behaviors that are based on traditional rural values, but also those derived from a continuous process of infusion and evolution.

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